

**For Immediate Release  
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**DCS Commissioner Creates Justice For Juveniles Task Force  
Group to study recommendation for best practices in juvenile justice system**

**Nashville, Tenn.** - Tennessee Department of Children's Services Commissioner Viola P. Miller has signed a charter for the creation of the Justice for Juveniles Task Force, the first ever task force to be dedicated to strategizing recommendations for best practices exclusively for children in the juvenile justice system.

Commissioner Miller believes the task force will assist DCS to better serve children and families in Tennessee. "Some people believe that children in the juvenile justice system are beyond help and are undeserving of a second chance. I disagree and maintain that we can encourage life changing results and outcomes in these impressionable young boys and girls," said Miller. "We are looking at a comprehensive approach to address the myriad concerns and issues intrinsic to the treatment, care and rehabilitation of the juvenile justice population."

Kenneth W. Steverson, who serves as executive director for juvenile justice for DCS, has been appointed to chair the task force and selected its members, which includes case managers, educators, child advocates, representatives of the provider community, juvenile judges and juvenile justice administrators, as well as representatives from the Department of Corrections, the Board of Parole and the Department of Mental Health.

The task force will hold its first introductory meeting on Wed., Oct. 27. The task force scheduled to submit recommendations to Commissioner Miller, who will determine their appropriateness and feasibility for implementation.

"We're looking for input from all the stakeholders in the juvenile justice system, so the department can consider best practices and make changes or amendments to its processes," Steverson explained.

Steverson has enlisted several esteemed presenters in the field of juvenile justice and child advocacy, among them: John Stettler, an independent corrections consultant with 27 years of experience in the corrections community in California; David M. Altschuler, a principal research scientist at The Johns Hopkins Institute for Policy Studies and faculty member of the Johns Hopkins Center for the Prevention of Youth Violence; Joseph Thome, who works as manager for Boulder County Community Justice Services in Boulder, Co.; and Jacque Page and Bill Murphy, of the University of Tennessee, who together will discuss a service delivery model that they developed for the treatment of adolescent sex offenders, which Steverson said could possibly be used to address mental health and alcohol and drug treatment.

"The methodology was to think about who had sound experience in juvenile justice and to get representation from across the state," Steverson said. "There was much conscious thought about who was selected."

The task force will be organized into three work groups, each addressing specific concerns and issues relevant to respective areas of the juvenile justice system. The work groups are as follows:

- **Pre-custodial Issues** This group will examine probation services, alternatives to detention, graduated sanctions and diversion services.
- **Custodial Issues** This group will observe services to children currently in DCS custody and examine mental health treatment, education and vocational training, alcohol and drug treatment, treatment of sex offenders and alternatives to custody that would not compromise community security.
- **Aftercare Issues** This group will examine the services DCS currently provides to children once they leave custody, TennCare coverage for mental and medical care, and ensuring public safety when children return home.

The task force could be the catalyst for forming an advisory board for continued examination of the juvenile justice system and implementation of recommended best practices. “What we’ll likely do from this point on is have smaller, regular meetings in the field, as guided by the recommendations by the task force,” he said.

The Tennessee Department of Children’s Services was established to provide the best possible care for children and youth who are in state custody, or at significant risk of entering custody, and their families. Services provided by DCS include child protective services, foster care, adoption, programs for delinquent youth, probation/aftercare, and treatment and rehabilitation programs for identified youth.

#### **Justice for Juveniles Task Force Members**

**Judge Joseph Michael Ayers**, Campbell County General Sessions Court

**James Ball**, Partner, JB & Associates, Memphis, Tenn.

**Cyndy Banks**, Case Reviewer, Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth

**Brenda Bell**, CS Program Director 1, Tennessee Department of Children’s Services

**Kent Berkley**, Partner, M & B Consulting, Nashville, Tenn.

**Kim Coffey**, Juvenile Court Administrator, Lauderdale County Courthouse

**Nancy Davis**, Director of Juvenile Services, Hawkins County Juvenile Court

**Albert Dawson**, Director of Group Homes, Tennessee Department of Children’s Services

**Jack Derryberry**, Attorney, Nashville, Tenn.

**Brennan Francois**, Director of Treatment of Facilities, Tennessee Department of Children’s Services

**Kathy Gracey**, Director of Programs, Division of Community Psychiatry, Vanderbilt University Medical Center

**Fred Hamilton**, Case Manager/Team Leader, Tennessee Department of Children’s Services, Maury County

**Tricia Henwood**, Director of Medical and Behavioral Services, Tennessee Department of Children’s Services

**Leydee Hernandez**, TennCare Consumer Advocate, Nashville, Tenn.

**Steve Hornsby**, General Counsel, Tennessee Department of Children’s Services

**Gary Housepian**, Managing Attorney, Tennessee Protection and Advocacy, Inc., Nashville, Tenn.

**Terry Kinnaman**, Substance Abuse Coordinator, Riverbend Maximum Security Institution, Nashville, Tenn.

**Mildred Lawhorn**, Regional Administrator - Southwest, Tennessee Department of Children’s Services

**Liz Ledbetter**, Program Specialist, Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities

**Jacqueline Lee**, Director of Community Services, Tennessee Department of Children’s Services

**Carlton Lewis**, Senior Referee, Davidson County Juvenile Court

**Brittany Loney**, Youth Representative, Nashville, Tenn.

**Judge Hansel McAdams**, Henry County Courthouse

**Barry McGlothlin**, Case Manager, Tennessee Department of Children's Services, Johnson City, Tenn.

**Mary Meador**, Director of Educational Programs, Tennessee Department of Children's Services

**Dan Michael**, Chief Counsel, Juvenile Court of Memphis and Shelby County

**Rebecca Montgomery**, Assistant Director, Administrative Office of the Courts, Tennessee Supreme Court

**Vickey Moreland**, Correctional Program Manager 1, Tennessee Board of Probation and Parole

**Gary Morris**, Superintendent, Mountain View Youth Development Center, Dandridge, Tenn.

**Linda O'Neal**, Executive Director, Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth

**John Page**, Senior Vice President of Child, Adolescent and Family Services, Centerstone Mental Health Center, Nashville, Tenn.

**David Patterson**, Assistant District Attorney, Cookeville, Tenn.

**Cindy Perry**, Executive Director, Select Committee on Children and Youth

**Tom Riss**, Regional Administrator - Davidson County, Tennessee Department of Children's Services

**Rob Robinson**, Public Defender, Juvenile Justice Center, Nashville, Tenn.

**Lee Rone**, Regional Director, Youth Villages, Memphis, Tenn.

**Connie Sloan**, Director, Madisonville Group Home, Madisonville, Tenn.

**Debrah Stafford**, Juvenile Justice Director, Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth

**Ken Steverson**, Executive Director of Juvenile Justice, Tennessee Department of Children's Services

**Judge Barry Tatum**, Wilson County Juvenile Court

**Brian Tunstall**, Juvenile Justice Services Coordinator, Helen Ross McNabb Center, Knoxville, Tenn.

**Jeune Wood**, Chief Administrative Officer, Juvenile Court of Memphis and Shelby County

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